

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 18, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar,

We write in support of Shell Oil's application for the 2010 Chukchi Sea plan of exploration (POE.) As you are well aware, the Chukchi represents what is certainly among the largest conventional, unexplored oil and natural gas fields in the U.S. Shell has spent years of work and billions of dollars to satisfy the complex logistics, planning, and permitting process required by law. We have previously communicated to you the significance of this energy resource to Alaska's economy, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and domestic energy security.

Alaska continues to improve upon and grow its capacity as a leader in energy production coexistent with robust fish and wildlife management programs. We would not support this particular exploration plan if we did not believe, based on our collective experience with the associated issues and understanding of the associated technology and science, that this could be conducted in such a way as to preserve the neighboring culture and environment. Furthermore, exploratory wells have been drilled in the Chukchi in the past and we are aware of no resulting significant impacts upon the marine ecosystem or the Alaskan communities that so heavily rely upon it. In fact, Arctic wildlife has largely flourished with energy development.

The prior drilling of exploratory wells also reminds us that exploration does not, by any means, necessarily result in production. Exploration simply allows all interested parties – public and private – to make a more informed decision on whether proceeding to a development phase is in their respective interests. Should production be an option moving forward, we will support careful steps to ensure the prevention, mitigation, and if necessary, restoration of all environmental impacts. Specifically, we have variously introduced and supported legislation to limit transportation of oil in the Arctic to pipelines, rather than tankers, and to provide revenue sharing to the State and affected communities so as to further adjust for any potential threats.

In sum, we reiterate our strong support for the 2010 Chukchi Sea POE and ask that you complete your good work on the 5-Year Plan deficiencies as soon as possible. We cannot overstate the long term importance of this energy project to our home state. Thank you for your continued diligence and careful consideration in this matter.

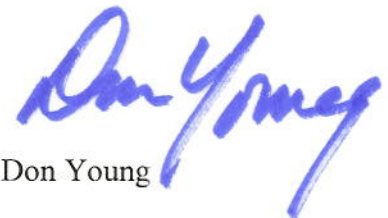
With best wishes,



Lisa Murkowski



Mark Begich



Don Young